

FEAR

MARVEL COMICS GROUP™



25¢

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ADVENTURE INTO FEAR WITH

THE MAN CALLED MORBIUS™

THE LIVING VAMPIRE



ONE BY ONE,
THE DENIZENS
OF THIS CITY
HAVE FALLEN
BEFORE MY
INHUMAN
THIRST--

"AND YOU
ARE NEXT!"

A WORLD
HE NEVER
MADE!



Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MAN CALLED **MORBIUS!**™

ALONE AGAINST ARCTURUS!

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THE WIND IN THIS
PLACE BLOWS
BLUSTERY AND COLD
AND CHILLS EVEN
THE MARROWLESS
BONES OF THE
LIVING VAMPIRE
CALLED MORBIUS.

FOR DAYS HE HAS
WANDERED AMID
THESE RUINS, NEVER
LAYING EYES ON A
LIVING SOUL, WHILE
THE HUNGER IN
HIM GREW.

HUNGER NOT FOR
THE BREAD AND
WINE WHICH
SUSTAIN OTHER
MEN -- BUT FOR
BLOOD --
HUMAN BLOOD!

FOR ONLY BY
FEASTING ON
THE LIFE-JUICES
OF OTHERS CAN
HE STAVE OFF
THE DEADLY
DISEASE WHICH
THREATENS HIS
OWN LIFE.

AND NOW... HE
HAS FOUND
HIS FEAST!

SLOWLY... STEALTHILY...
CAREFUL NOT TO
DISTURB EVEN A
SINGLE CHUNK
OF ROCK--
HE MOVES
CLOSER.



THEY ARE SPEAKING--
IN A TONGUE HE
CANNOT UNDERSTAND.

BUT HE KNOWS
THE TONE OF
THEIR WORDS:
THESE TWO
ARE IN LOVE.



A PITY,
REALLY.

BECAUSE
ONE OF
THEM IS
MARKED
FOR
DEATH.



HE SEES ONLY THE MASSIVE NECK, ITS VEINS
BULGING WITH THE THICK RED LIQUID THAT
WILL KEEP HIM ALIVE.

AND SO THE VAMPIRE NEVER
STOPS TO CONSIDER-- THAT
THIS HARDY WARRIOR MIGHT
NOT BE A PASSIVE VICTIM.



MORBIUS LEAPS--AND IN HIS MADNESS
DOES NOT SEE THE COURAGE AND
CHARACTER IN THE YOUNG MAN'S
FACE AND EYES.



THUS, IT COMES AS
NO SMALL SURPRISE
WHEN--



--THE
YOUTH
STRIKES
BACK!

NOW THERE IS PAIN
TO COMPOUND THE
AGONY OF THE
HUNGER-- A
DULL, NUMBING
ACHE
IN THE
GUT...

... AND THE SHARP,
STABBING TINGE AS HE
IS HURLED BACK INTO
THE CRAGGY RUINS.



TO THE AGONY AND
THE PAIN NOW ADD
ANGER, AS THE
BOLD YOUTH SEIZES
THE OFFENSIVE.



MORBIUS TRIES TO SPEAK-- TO CRY
OUT TO THE RAVEN-MANED YOUTH
THAT RESISTANCE IS FUTILE.



BUT THE VAMPIRE IS
MADDENED BEYOND WORDS.



AND THE
DWINDLING
RESERVOIR
OF REASON
THAT
REMAINS
IN THIS
SCIENTIST-
TURNED-
BLOOD-
SUCKER...

... KNOWS THAT THIS IS THE
ONLY LANGUAGE HE CAN
SPEAK THAT THE WARRIOR
WILL UNDERSTAND.

THE LANGUAGE OF FORCE--
THE MEANS OF COMMUNICA-
TION (OR OF CIRCUMVENTING
SAME) HE ONCE DESPISED
MOST OF ALL.

BUT THAT WAS
IN ANOTHER
TIME-- ANOTHER
LIFE--!



HERE-- NOW-- ALL THAT MATTERS IS SURVIVAL.
REMORSE WILL COME LATER, AFTER THE
FANGS HAVE DONE THEIR WORK...



... AFTER HE HAS DRUNK
LONG AND DEEP FROM
THE VEINS OF THIS HOT-
BLOODED BATTLER!

MAYBE...!

≡ phaugh ≡

WHAT MADNESS
IS THIS? THE
LIQUID IN HIS
VEINS--IS NOT
BLOOD!

AND THAT STARTLING,
SOMEWHAT DISTASTEFUL
REVELATION BRINGS
MORBIUS ABRUPTLY
BACK TO SANITY--OR A
SEMBLANCE THEREOF.

YOU! FEMALE!
TELL ME WHERE
I AM-- HOW I
CAME TO BE
HERE!

SILENCE.
NO REPLY.

INDEED, SHE REACTS NOT AT ALL TO WHAT HE SAYS--
ONLY TO THE DESPERATION WITH WHICH IT IS VOICED.
SHE FEARS HIM-- BUT SHE CANNOT GLEAN MEANING
FROM HIS WORDS.

SO MORBIUS
TURNS INWARD
FOR ANSWERS--
FORCES HIS YET-
HAZY MEMORY
TO RECALL THE
EVENTS THAT
LED HIM TO
THESE
OBVIOUSLY
ALIEN RUINS.

EVENTS THAT BEGAN WHEN HE FELL
UNDER THE HYPNOTIC SPELL OF THE DEMON-
PRIEST DAEMON, WHO SENT HIM ON A
MISSION OF MURDER--

--WHICH WAS THANKFULLY
INTERRUPTED BY THE UN-
CANNY CARETAKERS, BEINGS
FROM BEYOND THE STARS
WHO HAD GUIDED MANKIND
THROUGH ITS RACIAL
INFANCY...

...AND WERE
NOW ATTEMPTING
TO SAVE IT BOTH
FROM ITSELF AND
DAEMON'S CULT
OF DEMON-
WORSHIPPERS!

RELUCTANTLY, MORBIUS
RECALLS, HE SIDED WITH
SCIENCE AGAINST SOR-
CERY... AND THIS WAS
TOSSED INTO BATTLE
WITH DAEMON'S CAT-
DEMON SLAVE
BALKATAR--

--WHO, IN TURN,
KIDNAPED HIM,
BROUGHT HIM
TO THE OTHER-
DIMENSIONAL
REALM WITHIN,
WHOSE MON-
ARCH DESIRED
HIM AS A
MEANS TO
CONTROL POPU-
LATION IN THAT
SELF-ENCLOSED
KINGDOM!!

*AS DEPICTED IN
FEAR #20-22--ROY!



BUT THE THOUGHT OF BEING SO CALLOUSLY USED WAS ALMOST AS REPUGNANT TO MORBIUS AS HIS VAMPIRIC CURSE.

SO HE AGAIN SEIZED THE REINS OF HIS OWN DESTINY...

...CHOOSING TO FLING HIMSELF INTO THE RIVER THAT FLOWED THROUGH THE REALM WITHIN-- AND DISAPPEARED INTO THAT LAND'S SOLID ROCK WALLS...

...RATHER THAN TO LIVE FOREVER ON THE BLOOD OF THE CAT-PEOPLE.



YES... I RECALL VANISHING INTO THE ROCK... BEING BORNE AWAY BY THE RIVER'S CURRENT.

BUT I KNOW NOTHING OF WHAT NEXT OCCURRED!



THOSE MOONS... THE UNEARTHLY FLORA... SURELY MEAN I AM NOT ON EARTH!

HOW DID I ARRIVE HERE-- WHEREVER "HERE" IS?



AND WERE THAT NOT EVIDENCE ENOUGH-- THE TECHNOLOGY WHICH CREATED THESE DEVICES IS-- OR WAS-- FAR BEYOND ANYTHING ON EARTH!



THEORIES... HYPOTHESES... CONCEPTS RACE THRU THE BRILLIANTLY ANALYTICAL MIND OF MICHAEL MORBIUS.

PERCEPTIONS NOTED-- IDEAS DISCARDED-- QUESTIONS RAISED-- UNTIL--

--HIS GLANCE HAPPENS TO FALL ONCE MORE ON A SICKENING REMINDER OF HIS REALITY.

I... HAVE KILLED... AGAIN...!

AND THIS TIME-- FOR NOTHING!



THERE IS, IN THE TIME BETWEEN CRAVINGS, AN ABIDING SENSE OF HUMANITY IN THIS MAN--BAT CALLED MORBIS.

HIS CAREER--THE FIELD IN WHICH HE WON HIS NOBEL PRIZE-- WAS BIOPHYSICS.

AND THE MORE HE STUDIED LIFE, THE MORE HE GREW TO RESPECT THE MIRACLE OF IT.

THUS, THE DEEP SORROW HE FEELS NOW IS GENUINE.

INDEED, WERE IT NOT FOR THAT DEEP-ROOTED BELIEF IN THE SANCTITY OF LIFE...

...HE MIGHT HAVE ENDED HIS OWN LONG AGO.



HE RISES NOW, TRIES TO LOOK AWAY FROM THE HIDEOUS PUNCTURE-WOUNDS HIS FANGS INFLICTED UPON THE YOUTH.

BUT HE CANNOT LOOK AWAY, AND THIS TIME...



...IT'S NOT THE HORROR OR SELF-HATRED HE FEELS THAT RIVETS HIS ATTENTION.

RATHER, IT IS THE SCIENTIST'S CURIOSITY, SOMETHING ABOUT THOSE WOUNDS IS... NOT RIGHT.



THE BLOOD...COLOR-LESS--THE SKIN... MORE LIKE TORN FIBER--SYNTHETIC FIBER--!

I'VE KILLED... AN ANDROID! AN ARTIFICIAL HUMAN BEING! NO WONDER I COULD NOT DRINK ITS "BLOOD"!



UNFORTUNATELY, THAT REALIZATION HAS ALSO REMINDED HIM THAT HIS NEED FOR THE STUFF HAS NOT BEEN SATIED!

YOU! ARE YOU HUMAN--OR AS BLOODLESS AS YOUR DEAD LOVER?



HE CAN HEAR THE RUTHLESSNESS, THE DESPERATION RETURNING TO HIS VOICE.

HIS SHOCK AT THE UNSAVORY TASTE OF THE YOUTH'S "BLOOD" IS DISSIPATING.



HE KNOWS THE FEMALE CANNOT ANSWER--THAT HIS LANGUAGE IS ALIEN TO HER.

BUT THE MANIA IS UPON HIM AGAIN--

--THE IRRESISTIBLE DRIVE TO FEEL TEETH SINKING INTO SOFT FLESH, TO FEEL STEAMING LIQUID ON HIS TONGUE...



... TO DRINK THE BITTER-- SWEET CRIMSON THAT GIVES HIM LIFE.

AND THIS TIME, HIS EFFORTS ARE REWARDED.



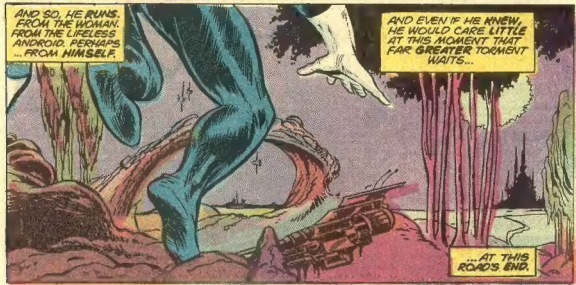
SHE... IS HUMAN, AND SHE WILL LIVE. I STOLE ONLY AS MUCH AS I NEEDED... FOR NOW.

BUT THAT WILL NOT SUFFICE FOR LONG.



WHILE I STILL HAVE CONTROL OF MYSELF-- I MUST LEAVE THIS PLACE.

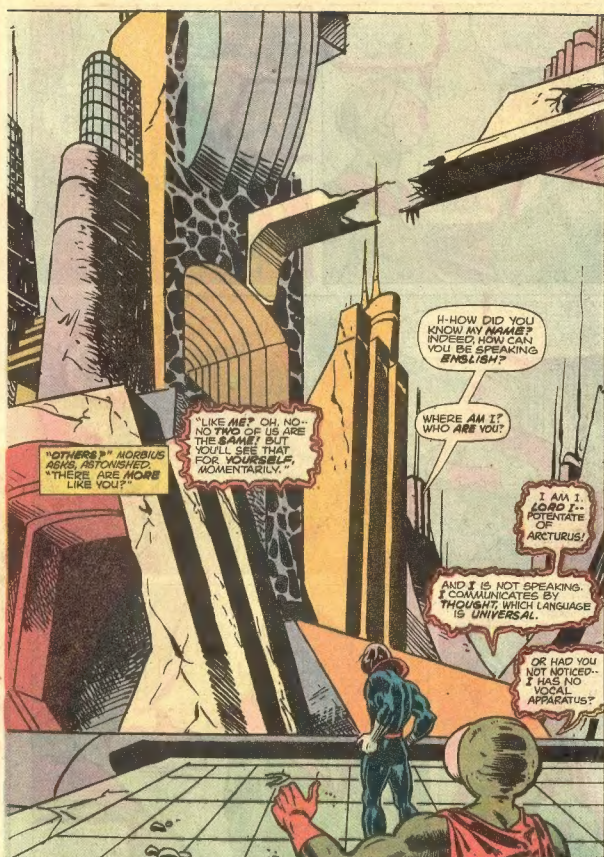
FOR SHE COULD NOT SURVIVE A SECOND BITE.



AND SO, HE RUNS. FROM THE WOMAN. FROM THE LIFELESS ANDROID. PERHAPS... FROM HIMSELF.

AND EVEN IF HE KNEW, HE WOULD CARE LITTLE AT THIS MOMENT THAT FAR GREATER TORMENT WAITS...

... AT THIS ROAD'S END.





TELEPATHY-- MENTAL PROJECTION--? THEN DID YOU READ MY MIND TO LEARN MY NAME?

YOUR NAME... AND THE NAME YOUR RACE HAS GIVEN TO OUR SUN: ARCTURUS.

I AM ASTOUNDED...



I HAVE SEEN SUCH FEATS PERFORMED BEFORE ONLY BY THE ANCIENT CARE-TAKERS-- AND THEIR GENETICALLY-ENGINEERED PROGENY.

WE KNOW THIS, TOO. TRUTH, IT IS WHY WE BROUGHT YOU HERE.

YOU KEEP SPEAKING OF "WE." YET I SEE ONLY YOU.



YOU DO NOT EVEN SEE I-- ONLY IT'S PROJECTION, WHICH MUST NOW FAAAAAAD!

NO! WAIT! YOU PROMISED TO EXPLAIN...!

AGAIN, MORBIUS, INCORRECT. T'WAS I WHO PROMISED.

WHAT--? THE REAL I?



DO YOU THINK YOU SHALL BE HAPPY HERE, MORBIUS?

YOU WILL NOT BE RETURNING TO EARTH, MORBIUS.

HAPPY? I DO NOT UNDERST--

THIS IS YOUR NEW HOME.



WHAT?!

YOU ARE AN ALLY OF THE SO-CALLED CARE-TAKERS. ARE YOU NOT?

A RELUCTANT ALLY, YES.

THAT IS WHY I CANNOT LET YOU GO.

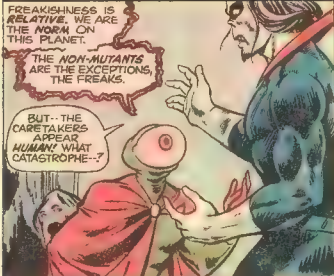


LEST YOU HELP THEM DO
TO YOUR RACE... WHAT
THEY DID TO OURS.

TURN, M'GENIUS.
MEET THE PEOPLE
OF ARCTURUS.

THE
CARETAKERS...
ARE OUR
ANCESTORS.

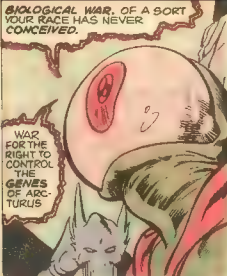
NO! YOU
CANNOT BE!
YOU ARE ALL
FREAKS!



FREAKISHNESS IS
RELATIVE. WE ARE
THE NORM ON
THIS PLANET.

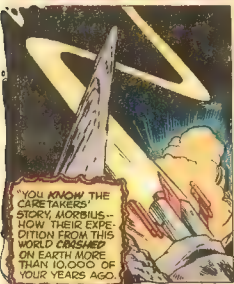
THE NON-MUTANTS
ARE THE EXCEPTIONS,
THE FREAKS.

BUT--THE
CARETAKERS
APPEAR
HUMAN! WHAT
CATASTROPHE--?

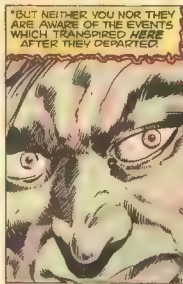


BIOLOGICAL WAR, OF A SORT
YOUR RACE HAS NEVER
CONCEIVED.

WAR
FOR THE
RIGHT TO
CONTROL
THE
GENES
OF ARC-
TURLUS



"YOU KNOW THE
CARETAKERS'
STORY, MORBIUS--
HOW THEIR EXPE-
DITION FROM THIS
WORLD CRASHED
ON EARTH MORE
THAN 10,000 OF
YOUR YEARS AGO.



"BUT NEITHER YOU NOR THEY
ARE AWARE OF THE EVENTS
WHICH TRANSPIRED HERE
AFTER THEY DEPARTED

"OUR SCIENCE HAD
MASTERED THE
MANIPULATION OF
HUMAN
HEREDITY...



"AND OVER THE YEARS DEBATE
RAGED AS TO WHETHER THAT
KNOWLEDGE SHOULD BE EMPLOYED
TOWARD PERFECTING THE RACE
IN TIME, IT WAS DECIDED THAT
IT SHOULD.

"THUS, ALL NATURAL
REPRODUCTION
CEASED, AS IT WAS
DECEED THAT
CHILDREN BORN OF
WOMEN WOULD
BE DESTROYED.

"AND THE INFLASK
FACORIES
CAME INTO
BEING.

"BUT NOT
WITHOUT
OPPOSITION.

"TO MANY, IT SEEMED INHERENTLY WRONG TO TAKE EVOLUTION OUT OF NATURE'S HANDS. SO THEY SOUGHT TO REVERSE THE TREND... WITH **TERRORIST MEANS**."

"THEY BEGAN **BOMBING** INCUFLASK INSTALLATIONS."

"AND SHORTLY, FULL-SCALE **WAR** ERUPTED."

"OUR WEAPONS, AS YOU MAY WELL IMAGINE, WERE **VASTLY MORE EFFICIENT** THAN EARTH'S PRIMITIVE **NUCLEAR** DEVICES."

"THEY LIVE IN TINY TRIBAL ENCLAVES NOW... AND MOST HAVE FORGOTTEN WHY."

"THE GUNS ARE MYSTERIES, TEMPLES FOR THEM."

AS FOR THE FLASK-**OWNED SUPER-RACE**... YOU ARE NOW **AMONG** THEM.

THE BOMB RADIATION TOOK ITS TOLL ON US AS WELL.

PRECISELY. THEY MUST BE DESTROYED BEFORE IT CAN HAPPEN AGAIN.

"MOST OF HUMANITY WAS **DESTROYED**. THOSE WHO SURVIVED WENT **MAZ**, DESERTED THE CITIES."

AND YOU FEAR THE CARETAKERS MAY BRING ABOUT A **SIMILAR DISASTER** ON EARTH?

DESTROYED? IS THERE NO **OTHER** MEANS BY WHICH TO **DISSUADE** THEM?

OF MIX-UPS, MONSTERS, AND MATRIMONY!

STAN LEE'S SOAPBOX

Remember last ish? Remember the promise I made you? I said I'd hit you with the most eagerly-awaited announcement of the year, right? Well, you've probably guessed it by now, 'cause we've been mentioning it and hinting at it for months. I'm talking, natch, about our most important single publication—the one you've been clamoring for all these years! It's not a magazine, but a real, honest-to-Forbush book—destined to become the most prized best-seller of the decade! The title tells you the whole bit—THE ORIGIN OF MARVEL COMICS! It's a prestige library edition, published by Simon and Schuster, scheduled to go on sale in bookstores throughout the free world some time in October! We're not sure of the price yet, but it won't be cheap—so start saving your shekels, sahib. It's bigger than 200 pages, containing the unabridged origins of The Fantastic Four, Spidey, The Hulk, and more, more, more—handsomely printed in rich, full, glorious color! Also, not only does it contain the most anxiously-awaited strips of all time, but you'll also find page after page of behind-the-scenes, bombshells, giving you the real, uncensored scoop on how Marvel Comics was born! Every page is dynamite—and every word is true! I oughta know—I'm the guy who wrote it! It names names and spares no punches. THE ORIGIN OF MARVEL COMICS—on sale this fall! If you've a bad memory, don't worry about it. There's always the chance that we'll remind you again in the next few months. (Like on every other page!) Oh, and before I forget—let me toss a word of appreciation to the wonderful gang at Worcester Polytech University in Massachusetts for the rollicking reception they gave me a few weeks ago. I couldn't tell if they were applauding my speech or stompin' to keep warm, but it was a blast no matter what! And now, till we meet again, think peace—think love—think Marvel. It could be habit-forming.

Excellior!

Stan

ITEM! Special last-minute announcement! Our 35¢ and 60¢ mags have gone the way of all flesh! In other words, we're discontinuing 'em. But, before you gulp that cyanide pill, friend, let us hestien to clue you in—we're just switching all our over-sized epics to one size, one price! Just 50¢ for 68 big pages, with a feature-length 30-page all-new spectacular in almost every one of our nine

Giant-Size titles. Confused? Well, for the full fabulous details, you'll have to pick up this month's GIANT-SIZE SPIDER-MAN #1 (co-starring DRACULA, who else?)—GIANT-SIZE DEFENDERS #1, GIANT-SIZE AVENGERS #1, or whatever else we happen to toss atcha. Then, you'll know at least as much about this dramatic change-over as we do—and take it from us, that ain't much, eh?!

ITEM! This is it! The month when we present a dynamic new feature, which starts in the current issue of ASTONISHING TALES, now on sale. First, though, that fabled picture-worth-a-thousand-words:



Okay, now that you've taken a gander at what our newest, maybe most offbeat hero yet looks like, we'll fill you in: He's DEATHLOK, THE DEMOLISHER—and he's part cyborg, part superhero, and maybe just a touch of monster, all rolled up into one pulsating package by RICH (Swash) BUCKLER, who conceived and drew the awesome origin tale, and Devil-May-Care DOUG MOENCH, who supplied some of the most unique scripting we've seen in a month of Mondays! Quite frankly, we think Deathlok's gonna take the waiting world by storm—and that's no hype! Pick up ASTONISHING TALES #25; and see for yourself why 1974 is already being heralded as THE MARVEL AGE OF COMICS—PHASE TWO! We're shifting into high gear, troops—but we're not going anywhere without you!

ITEM! Hey, guess what! Looking over our ever-frenetic schedule, we just noticed that this is the first time in many moons that we're not introducing any new mags—with the exception of a couple of 50¢ extravaganzas, and if you don't count one Deathlok, the Demolisher—which, now that we think of it, doesn't leave us exactly standing still! Fact is, we're just slowing down to catch our breath for a little while, as we consolidate our line of 25¢ and 50¢ color comics—our 75¢ magazine masterpieces—our 40¢ CRAZY fun-fest—that forthcoming Marvel Origins Book that Smiley told you about earlier—and a couple of other projects we can't even mention yet (mainly 'cause right now we can't remember what they are). But, a few short weeks from now, don't be too surprised if it turns out we had another inspiration or three up our sleeve, hear?

MARVELOUS MARVEL MINI-ITEMS! Wed ding bells are waking up that Bullpen Gang of ours! First, over the Christmas holidays, it was Marriage-Minded MURRAY FRIEDMAN, our hard-working Assistant Production Manager who specializes in our 75¢ mags, to his lovely ADRIENNE (who, weirdly enough, is a former Hunter College lab partner of Rascally ROY's own wife, JEAN. • • Then, come January, Merry GERRY CONWAY took a couple of days off from his super hero scripting to tie the connubial knot with Cute CARLA JOSEPH, Roy's super-secretary and general Gal Friday. Between Ger, who writes several of our mags a month (plus occasional science-fiction paperbacks, including a forthcoming series or two), and Carla, who's an off-Broadway playwright in between her many Marvel chores, we've got a feeling that the Conways' neighbors on Manhattan's West Side are gonna be driven out of their skulls by the sound of two twin typewriters clackin' away night and day! Anyway, best wishes both to GERRY and CARLA, and to MURRAY and ADRIENNE—and somebody help our poor editor pick all that rice out of his shoes, willya?

ITEM THE LAST! Next time around, we'll mention several more block-bustin' bargains you can get once you've amassed a complete set of our much-praised, much-clipped MARVEL-VALUE STAMPS! But, for now, we've just got room enough left to mention a few of our mammoth sized mags. So, till then—Save Energy! Subscribe, Already!

MARVEL MINI-COLLECTOR
Now On Sale!

GIANT-SIZE SPIDER-MAN #1: Spidey meets Dracula—, or does he? The answer's all yours—for just 50¢!

GIANT-SIZE MAN-THING #1: As if the macabre Man-Thing weren't enough—re-enter the Hulk's old nemesis, the Blob! A 50¢ fear-fest!

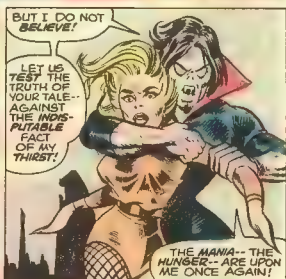
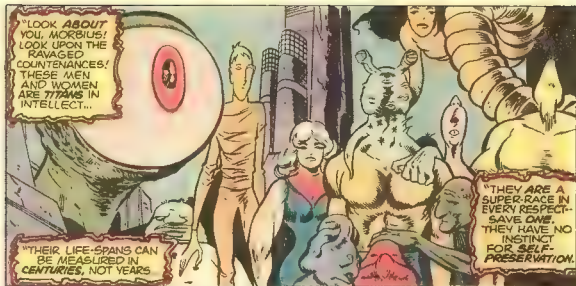
GIANT-SIZE FANTASTIC FOUR #2: The fabulous F.F.—lost in the untraveled paths of time! Plus—50¢ worth of features and fantasy!

DRACULA LIVES #7: She-pirates! The mysterious Death-Man! All this—plus the undisputed King of Vampires! 75¢—and sensational!

ZOMBIE #6: The Zombie strikes again! And so does Brother Voodoo! Six bits worth of supernatural thrills!

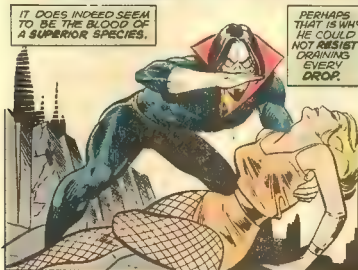
HAUNT OF HORROR #2: Special Exorcism Issue! Meet the man called Gabriel—DEVIL HUNTER! All this and Satana, too—for just 75¢!

SAVAGE TALES #5: Red Sonja is back—and Conan's got her! Two titanic, time less tales of swords and sorcery—plus phantasmagorical features—for only 75¢!





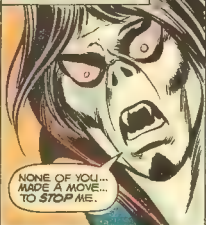
FOR ALMOST A FULL MINUTE, MORBIUS DRINKS, OBLIVIOUS TO ALL AROUND HIM. THIS BLOOD IS THICKER, HOTTER, RICHER THAN ANY HE HAS SAMPLED BEFORE--!



IT DOES INDEED SEEM TO BE THE BLOOD OF A SUPERIOR SPECIES.

PERHAPS THAT IS WHY HE COULD NOT RESIST DRAINING EVERY DROP.

TOO, PERHAPS IT'S WHY HE IS SO STUNNED AT THE REALIZATION THAT...



NONE OF YOU... MADE A MOVE... TO STOP ME.



NONE OF YOU MADE A MOVE !

YOU STOOD THERE-- AND LET ME DESTROY HER!

BECAUSE WE KNEW IT WAS WHAT SHE WOULD HAVE WANTED.

NOW DO YOU SEE, MORBIUS, WHY THE CARETAKERS MUST DIE?

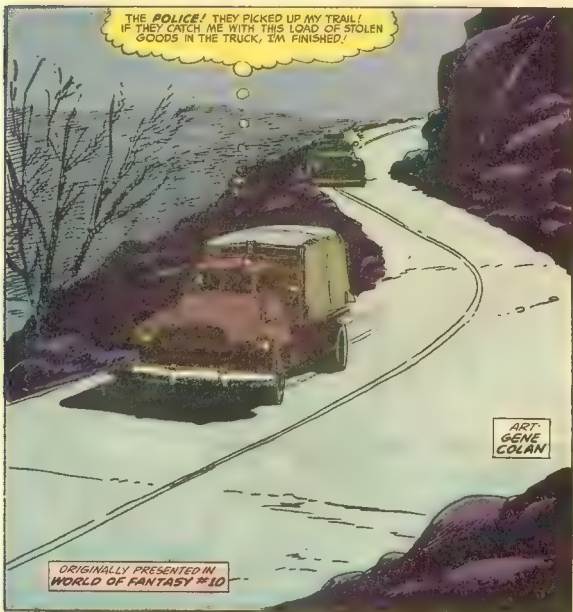
TELL ME, HOW I MAY BE... OF ASSISTANCE.

NEXT: TO SAVE HUMANITY FROM ITS SAVIORS, MORBIUS MUST AVOID THE UNERRING AIM OF-- **BLADE** -- THE VAMPIRE-SLAYER!

AGAIN AND AGAIN HE RETURNED TO THE SAME PLACE AS IF HE WERE A HELPLESS VICTIM TRAPPED IN A NIGHTMARE. WHAT BROUGHT HIM TO THIS SPOT? WHAT FORCE TRANSFORMED EVERY JOURNEY NICK TARAS TOOK INTO A DEAD END?

The LAST STOP

THE POLICE! THEY PICKED UP MY TRAIL!
IF THEY CATCH ME WITH THIS LOAD OF STOLEN
GOODS IN THE TRUCK, I'M FINISHED!



ART:
GENE
COLAN

ORIGINALLY PRESENTED IN
WORLD OF FANTASY #10

I'VE GOT TO SHAKE 'EM OFF! I'LL USE THE BACK ROADS! THEN I'LL DOBBLE BACK ON MY ROUTE!



SHORTLY AFTER, AS NICK RACED RECKLESSLY THROUGH THE DARK NIGHT...

I DON'T SEE THE PATROL CAR NOW MAYBE I SHOOK IT

H-HEY! LOOK OUT!

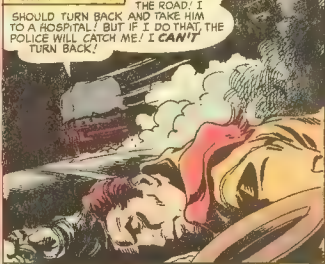


THERE'S A MAN IN THE ROAD! I-I CAN'T TURN IN TIME!



MOMENTS LATER...

HE'S LYING IN THE ROAD! I SHOULD TURN BACK AND TAKE HIM TO A HOSPITAL! BUT IF I DO THAT, THE POLICE WILL CATCH ME! I CAN'T TURN BACK!



AN HOUR LATER, AT A ROADSIDE DINER...

THE POLICE ARE LOOKING FOR A HIT-AND-RUN DRIVER WHO INJURED A MAN ON EAST PARK ROAD AN HOUR AGO! LUCKILY, THE VICTIM IS NOT SERIOUSLY HURT!

THANK GOODNESS!



THE POLICE WERE ON THE DRIVER'S TRAIL, WHEN THE ACCIDENT OCCURRED. THE DRIVER, WHO WAS TRANSPORTING STOLEN GOODS, IS STILL AT LARGE!

I'VE HAD MY LESSON I'M THROUGH MAKING A DIRTY DOLLAR!



AN HOUR LATER, AT A MIDTOWN WAREHOUSE...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN -KEEP THE MONEY?

I DON'T LIKE HOW I EARN IT! COUNT ME OUT FROM NOW ON! NO MORE STOLEN GOODS! I'M THROUGH!



ATTENTION, LITERATURE-LOVERS! WE INTERRUPT THIS
BULLPEN BONUS PAGE
TO BRING YOU THIS AWESOME ANNOUNCEMENT!

MARVEL

PRESENTS THE
FIRST
OF ITS
SENSATIONAL NEW

50¢
GIANTS!

Featuring:
count
DRACULA!
and the
FLAMING,
FIGHTING-MAN
HUMAN TORCH!

--BOTH COLORFULLY
CAVORTING IN
CONTINUAL COMBAT
WITH OUR OWN
WONDROUS

WEB-SPINNER!
(ALL THIS-- PLUS
SURPRISE FEATURES
TO BOOT!)

ON SALE
FOR ONLY
50¢

--AND WORTH
EVERY
SHECKEL!



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THAT NIGHT, NICK COULDN'T SLEEP! HE KEPT TOSSESS THIS WAY AND THAT! TALKING TO HIMSELF! WAVING HIS ARMS!

GET OUT OF THE WAY! I-I CAN'T STOP IN TIME! I'M A HIT-AND-RUN DRIVER!



BUT AN HOUR LATER, AS NICK TARAS DROVE THROUGH TOWN...

H-HEY! WHAT'S GOIN' ON HERE? THIS ISN'T THE WAY I WANT TO GO! WHAT AM I DOING HERE?



THE NEXT MORNING, NICK REPORTED FOR WORK, EXHAUSTED AND NERVOUS...

WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU, NICK? YOUR HANDS ARE TREMBLING!

I-I KNOW! COULDN'T SLEEP LAST NIGHT! GIVE ME MY ROUTE AND LET ME GO!



BUT FOR SOME REASON, THE TRUCK KEPT ON GOING, UNTIL...

IT'S STOPPED! BUT LOOK WHERE IT PARKED ITSELF! AT THE GATES OF A GRAVEYARD! WHY DID I COME HERE?



TEN MINUTES LATER, AFTER GETTING THE TRUCK TO RUN AGAIN...

WHAT MADE ME GO THERE? WAS IT MY CONSCIENCE? MAYBE IT'S JUST ONE OF THOSE THINGS WHERE MY SUBCONSCIOUS MIND MADE ME GO SOMEWHERE DESPITE MY CONSCIOUS WILL!



BUT THE NEXT DAY, ON LEAVING THE DISPATCHER'S OFFICE, THE TRUCK AGAIN TOOK NICK WHERE HE DIDN'T WANT TO GO!

I-I'M HERE AGAIN! W-WHAT'S H-HAPPENING TO ME? WHY AM I COMING TO THIS PLACE?



AGAIN, AFTER TEN MINUTES, THE TRUCK STARTED! NICK HURRIED TO A PHONE BOOTH!

CITY HOSPITAL? THAT HIT-AND-RUN VICTIM WHO WAS INJURED THE OTHER NIGHT... HOW'S HE DOING?

FINE! HE'LL BE OUT OF THE HOSPITAL IN A FEW DAYS!



SO HE'S ALIVE AND WELL! I-- I'VE GOT TO GET A GRIP ON MYSELF!



BUT DAY AFTER DAY, THE SAME THING HAPPENED! NO SOONER WOULD NICK TARAS LEAVE THE TERMINAL, THAN THE TRUCK HEADED FOR THE SAME SPOT!

EVEN THOUGH I **DIDN'T** KILL THAT MAN, I **MIGHT** HAVE! MY CONSCIENCE IS REBELLING FOR ALL THE UNLAWFUL THINGS I DID IN THE PAST!



IT WAS UNRELENTING! THE TRUCK WOULD HEAD FOR THE GRAVEYARD AS IF IT **BELONGED** THERE! DAY OR NIGHT, IT DIDN'T MATTER.

I'M BEING PUNISHED FOR MY CRIMES! FOR NOT STOPPING TO HELP THAT MAN! I CAN'T... **EVER**... ESCAPE FROM MY BAD CONSCIENCE!



THE FOLLOWING NIGHT, WHEN NICK TARAS WAS MAKING A NIGHT DELIVERY...

IT CAME HERE AGAIN! THAT SETTLES IT! I'LL **NEVER** HAVE A FREE CONSCIENCE TILL I CONFESS! I'M GOING TO FIND THE POLICE AND TELL THEM EVERYTHING! **POLICE! HELP! POLICE!**



A FEW MINUTES LATER, AS A PATROL CAR PASSED BY...

WHAT'S THE TROUBLE, MISTER?

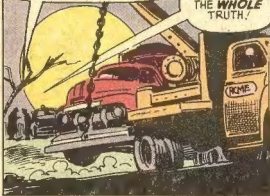
I'VE GOT A CONFESSION TO MAKE! SEE THAT TRUCK? DO YOU KNOW **WHERE** IT GOES EVERY TIME I LEAVE THE TERMINAL?



A HALF-HOUR LATER, AS A REPAIR CAR CAME OUT TO HAUL NICK'S TRUCK BACK TO THE TERMINAL...

WE'RE FOLLOWING THE REPAIR CAR BACK TO YOUR YARD! WE WANT TO ASK YOUR DISPATCHER A COUPLE OF QUESTIONS!

ALL RIGHT, OFFICER! BUT I TOLD YOU THE **TRUTH!** THE **WHOLE** TRUTH!



SOON...

WE WANT SOME INFORMATION ABOUT NICK TARAS' SCHEDULE ON THE NIGHT WHEN A HIT-AND-RUN ACCIDENT OCCURRED!

THOSE MECHANICS ARE INSPECTING MY ENGINE! THEY SEEM EXCITED ABOUT SOMETHING!



HEY, NICK! YOU WANT TO HEAR SOMETHIN' **FUNNY**? THIS ENGINE OF YOURS... WE PUT IT IN TWO WEEKS AGO! YOU KNOW **WHERE THIS ENGINE COMES FROM**?



NO **WONDER** THAT TRUCK OF YOURS KEPT GOIN' TO THE GRAVEYARD GATE! IT WAS **FORCE OF HABIT!** THE ENGINE COMES FROM A **FUNERAL CAR!**

A **HEARSE!** IS **THAT** WHY THE TRUCK TOOK ME **THERE...** OR WAS IT MY **CONSCIENCE?** I-I'LL NEVER KNOW!



MAIL IT TO MORBIUS

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Dear Bullpen Gang,

I honestly admit I was sure you were overextending yourselves on an as-yet-unestablished character, when you decided to have Morbius both in FEAR and in VAMPIRE TALES. But now having seen Don McGregor and Rich Buckler team up for such excellent results in the black-and-white book, and now Steve Gerber and Gil Kane in FEAR...well, I can't be sure about the final outcome, but I am beginning to moderate my views.

Some things are as yet undefined and unestablished, as with all characters so early in their existence, so I'll overlook the nit-picking for a few issues and tell you what I like about the MORBIUS series in FEAR.

I like Gil Kane. Boy, do I like Gil Kane! He is really in his element with a science fiction/mystery strip like Steve's "Project: Second Genesis!" Speaking of which, something else I like...Steve's rapidly-improved scripting. The man is following the path of a few other writers I can remember—Wein, Englehart, Wolfman, and some semi-unknown dude named Thomas. The quality of his work is beginning to outshine the quantity. (He's a prolific little devil!)

All in all, FEAR is a pretty good book, and I will continue to buy it in hopes that its sales will allow it continued life. Until next issue...Peace, Tranquility, and the ability to dream of tomorrow.

Steve Clement
15 Campbell Terrace
Pawtucket, R.I. 02860

Dear Morbius Creators,

FEAR #21 was great!! A vast improvement over last issue. The MORBIUS series at its second issue is already better than the majority of Marvel's well-established titles. If each issue is as good as #21, FEAR will become one of my favorite mags.

This has been Steve Gerber's best work outside of MAN-THING. Keep up the mystical science-fiction situation Morbius works well in it.

Gil's art was well-done and is suited perfectly for Morbius.

As for the cover logo, don't emphasize "The Living Vampire." Emphasize Morbius' name. Keep the cover balloons few, and have Gil draw the covers.

'Til Morbi gets sun-burned, make mine Marvel!

Ken Jordan
Croton, N.Y.

Thank you, Steve. Thank you, Ken. And thanks, too, to the hordes of others readers who sent their congratulations and kind words on ADVENTURE INTO FEAR #21.

Unfortunately, Gil was forced to leave the strip. His work on MARVEL TEAM-UP, the giant-size version of that mag, CONAN in our newly re-revived SAVAGE TALES, and a goodly number of Marvel covers precluded the possibility of his continuing on the MORBIUS strip.

But since Gil's departure you've been treated to the work of Rich Buckler (last ish) and Craig Russell, who we hope will remain as the strip's regular artist.

Again, people...our sincere appreciation for the enthusiasm you've expressed for this series. We'll try not to let you down in the months to come.

Dear Marvel,

Your MORBIUS series is really great. I liked it in black-and-white, but in color it's outasite! I have a few requests to make, though. First of all, bring back Paul Gulacy as artist. And next, don't have Morbius stick to just supernatural baddies. Bring around some other Marvel superstars once in a while, like Ghost Rider, the Silver Surfer, or maybe even Hawkeye. How about it?

Tim Derr

RD #1

Lewb, Pa. 17837

Hawkeye?? Well, maybe. Maybe not. Next issue, though, does feature an appearance by the vampire-slayer called Blade, who appeared initially in TOMBS OF DRACULA. And Morbi himself recently guest-starred in our giant-size Spidey team-up book. We're a little wary of superhero guestshots in FEAR at this point, but if enough of you want 'em, we'll try to oblige. Opinions, people?

Dear Marvel,

Congratulations! ADVENTURE INTO FEAR #21 was the best comic I've read in a long time! Mr. Gerber, you have ingeniously combined the elements of horror and science fiction and have come up with a truly fascinating (and realistic) comic. But please—I beg of you—do NOT make Morbius into "the vampire with a conscience," killing or nearly killing some innocent bystander every issue, then wallowing in pity both for himself and for his unfortunate victim.

Tod Seisser
East Meadow, N.Y.

Look at it this way, Tod: suppose you had to depend on killing other human beings to survive. Suppose further that you not only had to kill them, you had to sink your teeth into the flesh of their necks, and draw into your mouth the hot, bitter blood from their veins. Imagine yourself, the human being you are right now, in that kind of situation. And ask yourself whether you could endure that kind of existence without pitying yourself and those you are forced to kill. We think not. At least we're sure we couldn't go merrily on our way after having taken a person's life in so ruthless and and animalistic a manner.

Which is not to say that we may not be getting a bit too melodramatic in portraying Morbius' remorse and self-hatred. Again, we invite opinions on the question.

NEXT ISSUE: Back on earth, Morbius finds his back against the wall, as he comes face-to-face with that wielder of wooden knives, the fearless vampire-killer called BLADE! Plus a new and unsuspected revelation about the Caretakers! Plus the mystical menace of Daemond! Do we gotta say more??



THIS IS IT! YOUR

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